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below the normal conditions of health. Dr. Roth thinks that the present system of education, and the conditions of modern life, have a dwarfing effect upon the imagination, which lowers our ideals and encourages selfishness."

Dr. Roth may be a pessimist, but he hits the right nail on the head when he points out, that modern civilised life tends to a selfishness which becomes more pronounced as it passes from generation to generation. Of how many vicious evils this selfishness is the parent, no one can form an estimate. It is easy, however, to see how a selfish parent may have a heartless son; and in the next two generations we may expect to find an unprincipled grandson, and a vicious great grandson.

Here we must close this part of our subject. I claim to have proved, that evil hereditary tendencies of a moral kind are real and important.

(To be continued.)

## ABSTRACT OF AN ARTICLE ON CHILDREN'S LIES.

BY MISS WALKER

(Principal of St. George's High School and Training College, Edinburgh).

This article, by PROFESSOR G. STANLEY HALL, appeared in the "American Journal of Psychology," January, 1890, and has subsequently been reprinted in separate form.\*

[THE origin of Professor Stanley Hall's article, was the desire of some American women-teachers to reach a better understanding of the causes and preventives of the tendency, which all careful observers of children cannot fail to be acquainted with, *i.e.*, the tendency to deviate with greater or less degree of moral culpability from the narrow path of truth. Children who "never told a lie" are probably very rare, and the majority of those who, like the youthful George Washington, "cannot tell a lie," exist probably only in the imagination of fond mothers who have no knowledge of the psychology of the growing mind.

The materials for the Article were gathered in interviews with nearly three hundred school children—boys and girls—whose ages for the most part ranged from twelve to fourteen. These children were selected by the teachers as fairly representative for the purpose they had in view, and we are told that they were interviewed privately and in an indirect way designed not to wound the delicacy of the childish conscience. One feels that the results obtained might have been more scientifically valuable, had each of the three hundred cases been enquired into by the same enquirer, or enquirers, and not by different independent teachers; one feels also that statistics about lies, gathered from the children who tell them, may be even more fallacious than statistics in general;

\* An article with the same title, shorter, but otherwise almost literally identical, appeared in the "Pedagogical Seminary," in June, 1891.



and one cannot help wishing that the private and indirect method of investigation had been more explicitly indicated—and yet the conclusions arrived at seem to be verified by personal experience to a great degree. By personal experience, I mean, not only what I have observed in other children, but what I remember from the time when—had there been any scientific enquirer to do it—the private and indirect method might have been applied to myself.]

The results, from the nature of the material and the method of the investigation, could not well be tabulated, but they admit of classification into seven groups.

I. *Pseudophobia*, where every deviation from literal truth is alike heinous.

II. The *Lie Heroic*, which is justified as a means to noble ends.

III. Lies inspired by personal dislike; or *Truth for friends and Lies for enemies*.

IV. Lies inspired by *Selfishness*.

V. The deceptions of *Imagination and Play*.

VI. *Pseudomania*; or pathological lies.

VII. *Palliatives* for lies.

I. *Pseudophobia*, or a morbid horror of any deviation whatever from literal exactitude, which sees no difference in heinousness between "the blackest of lies" and the most trifling inaccuracy—even when this has been unintentional.

Out of the three hundred children examined, about a dozen took this view. Some of these were supposed to do it from affectation or priggishness [and ought therefore to have been classified elsewhere, properly speaking,] but others were sincerely in earnest.

One boy told how he repeated the word "not" hundreds of times, when alone, hoping that thereby he might neutralise the inexactitude of whatever he had said or might afterwards say. Another had for a long time gone in dread, lest for some chance, or perhaps unconscious lie, he might be struck dead like Ananias and Sapphira. Some children could not say "Yes" or "No," without qualifying it by "I think," aloud or in thought. Even when a distinction was made between the more culpable forms of falsehood, and mere unintentional inaccuracy of statement, the latter was still in the class of "lies."

This state of mind, Professor Stanley Hall thinks, is rare, and happily, in most cases, transitory, but he desires more records of cases, with details illustrative of causes and cure. In the cases examined, it seemed mostly due to the injudicious treatment of ethical and religious questions in the home, and in the Sunday School.

[In connection with this question, it may be interesting to quote a few sentences from a letter I received lately from a lady, who is governess to a girl of sixteen.

"About two years ago her mother began to notice signs of a morbid tendency. In winter she had influenza, and ever since she has been much worse. . . . She is always begging one's pardon for imaginary offences, and she will come and say, weeks afterwards, that she was not absolutely sincere, &c., &c. . . . She never says 'I know' about anything, whether in lessons or in every-day life. . . . She has a good memory, works well, and is really very quick at understanding things, but yet she says 'Yes, I know—at least, I think so, but I'm not quite sure that I understand.'"

I am inclined to think that *Pseudophobia* is a state of mind which, oftener than parents and teachers suppose, asserts itself in conscientious natures at the period of puberty, and during adolescence. It is probably, in many cases, carefully guarded from observation by the sufferer; and when it does come under observation, it is a phase which parents and teachers have often great difficulty in treating.]

II. The *Lie Heroic*, or the lie in which the end being good in itself is held to justify the means.

Boys or girls who profess themselves guilty of offences committed by weaker or less favoured companions, and who take upon themselves the penalty, were considered praiseworthy. The act itself was always approved, though sometimes with a formal qualification. The reason for this approval seems to be, that while the child recognises the conflict of motives involved, he is more keenly alive to the personal element in self-sacrifice than to the sublimity of devotion to truth.

The children examined, delighted to imagine themselves in situations which might call for the lie heroic, *e.g.*: if by saying their mother was out (when she was in) they might save her life, they would do it. This, they admitted, might



not be *exactly* right, but it would be their duty to do it, though it would not be at all right to tell a lie to save their own lives.

The writer suggests that the real delight which children take in arguments of this kind may arise from the relief it affords from their sense of invariable obligation to the truth, under which may lurk the desire to find exculpation for less heroic lies. On the other hand, it may arise from the germs of the adult's interest in situations in which moral obligations seem to come into conflict with one another. In either case, the more conscientious the teacher or parent, the more danger is there of injudicious treatment of this frame of mind. By treating it too seriously and too exhaustively, we may develop a morbid ethical self-consciousness and precocity.

After all, the occasions in real life in which any real difficulty can occur are rare, and no two moral situations of the kind are precisely alike. If therefore the child is really interested in what seems to be the conflict between veracity and other duties, let us confine his attention to specific and individual cases as they present themselves, and if a case occurs in which we fear to impose any dogmatic generalization, let us reverently refer him to the inner light of his own conscience, —to the private, protestant tribunal where personal moral convictions preside.

III. Lies induced by personal likes and dislikes, or, *Truth for friends; Lies for enemies.*

If a parent or a kind friend asks a child to tell a lie, it is not wrong to comply. On the other hand, it would be wrong to tell a lie to a parent or a kind friend. Yet in some cases it is difficult to tell the truth to friends, for example,—to own to an opposite opinion, fully and frankly, when asked to admire something. No difficulty of this kind is experienced with strangers. As might be expected, the girls examined were more addicted to this kind of *polite* untruthfulness than boys. Strange children and impertinent meddlers may be told "I do not know," on the ground that it is none of their business, this being added as a mental reservation.

The blind, unreasoning loyalty of children to those whom they admire is fraught with danger, for it leads them to believe that whatever pleases their idol must be good and

true. Hence they may be induced to lie and cheat, and to make promises that either cannot be kept, or that involve culpability and suffering in the keeping. On the other hand, when the object of admiration is worthy, the child's sense of personal fealty may gradually lead up to the sense of personal obligation and fidelity to truth in the abstract, which has no respect for persons.

As a corrective of the tendency of children to be influenced in their moral judgments by personal likes and dislikes, instruction in science is suggested.

[In an article by Professor Stanley Hall on "The Moral and Religious Training of Children and Adolescents" in the Pedagogical Seminary for June, 1891, we find the same view expressed. He says, "A little later [*i.e.*, a little later than the Kindergarten stage] habits of truthfulness are best cultivated by the use of the senses in exact observation. To see a simple phenomenon in nature and report it fully and correctly is no easy matter, but the habit of trying to do so teaches what truthfulness is, and leaves the impress of truth upon the whole life and character. I do not hesitate to say, therefore, that elements of science should be taught to children for the moral effects of its influences. At the same time all truth is not sensuous, and this training alone, at this stage tends to make the mind pragmatic, dry and insensitive to that other kind of truth, the value of which is not measured by its certainty, so much as by its effect upon us."]

In connection with this childish tendency to be "loyal" to friends at the expense of fidelity to truth, Professor Stanley Hall dwells on the great importance of the choice of friends in childhood and on the responsibility which rests on parent and teacher of watching the formation and course of friendships and of paying great attention to the development of character in children who are leaders or favourites of others.

IV. Lies inspired by *Selfishness*. As might have been expected, the greater number of the lies, which the children admitted, were prompted by the egoistic emotions.

Games of all kinds present opportunities for cheating, and when the contest assumes a public character, dexterity in outwitting adversaries is sometimes regarded as legitimate, provided it escapes detection.

School-life is blamed for many lies of the selfish kind;



*e.g.*, where children are expected to report themselves for petty faults, the temptation to hide the offence is created. Few children seemed to be able to resist the temptation to copy work, to prompt others, or to receive help of the same kind from others. Monitors have their work done by others as payment for not reporting them. Excuses for absence, getting away from school, coming late, etc., are easily trumped up, and—especially if the teacher is not popular—are not considered very heinous.

The ease with which this species of untruthfulness can be indulged in, the seductive way in which it panders to the indolence and self-indulgence of human nature, and the difficulty of detecting and bringing home guilt—all conspire to make it the most general, dangerous, and corrupting of all kinds of deceit.

To remedy the evil, all excessive use of emulation and of punishment must be guarded against, and opportunities and temptations to commit evil must be reduced to a minimum. Lies of this kind are, however, for the most part, forms of self-indulgence, and they should, in the great majority of cases, be treated as such, rather than dealt with directly as lies. The causes which lead to the lies must be attacked; *e.g.*, the indolence which seeks to secure its ends by the meanness of a lie, the bad habits which require a lie to screen them—these are the faults to be sought out and corrected. The writer suggests that our modern methods of education, tending as they do to make school-work “a sort of self-indulgence of natural interests,” require to be supplemented by arduous exercises, appealing directly to the will-power of the children, in order to cultivate habits of self-denial.

[It seems strange that there should be no explicit mention of lies told under the agitating or paralysing influence of fear—surely one of the most powerful motives to untruthfulness in the case of many children. Are American children never *afraid* of real or imaginary penalties, and therefore hurried into untruths, which, in calmer moments, they would not utter?]

V. The Deceptions of Imagination and Play. A great many of the plays of children owe their charm to partial self-deception. Children imagine or make believe that they are

animals, soldiers, hunters, Indians, artisans, tradesmen, doctors, angels, ogres. They baptise cats and bury dolls.

[A little girl, I know, who was taken for a boating expedition last summer, when asked why she had not brought her doll, replied “I did not bring her because *she is even more timid than I am.*” Another, who has a very large, life-like doll, is never so much delighted as when strangers think she is carrying a real child, and pity her because it is so heavy.]

Some children live to a great extent in an imaginary world of their own, *e.g.*, Sir James Mackintosh, after reading Roman History, used to fancy himself the Emperor of Constantinople and carry on the administration of the realm for hours at a time.

In this kind of imaginative idealisation children often hover on the confines of self-deception and of falsehood. Little children often make astounding statements as to what they have seen, which, though not true cannot exactly be called lies, because they imagine them to be true; *e.g.* a child says he has seen a dog as big as a horse, or apples on a cherry tree. The danger lies in the feeling of pleasure in the wonder or amusement such stories create in injudicious listeners, and thus semi-plausible stories may come to be told on purpose.

Again, children *locate* all events in the places they know and finally, often come to believe that they actually happened there; and children with vivid visualising power, have no hesitation in adding, in perfect good faith, details for which they have no authority.

[A child often says he was present when some event took place, when it is quite impossible that this can have been the case. Unless he is telling a deliberate falsehood, the probability is that he has visualised the scene so vividly that he really believes he was present. It is within my own recollection that I once, as a child, maintained, in all good faith that I had been present in church on an occasion when the clergyman broke down in his sermon. Not until it was clearly demonstrated to me that I could not have been present, because it could be proved that I was elsewhere at the time, did I abandon my position, and not until long afterwards did I understand why a graphic description of



the occurrence, and my own vivid mental picturing of the scene, should thus have obliterated the line of demarcation between Perception and Imagination.]

What this kind of imagination requires is guidance and control, not elimination. The childish tendency to sport with innocent fiction may, if unattended to, lead to the divorce of thought from reality in various directions, to self-deception and to the deception of others. The school has hitherto paid little attention to this tendency: the reading books do not provide suitable material for it to work upon, and modern literature for the young, if it develops it at all, develops it in the wrong way. The *best* literature of the world, presented in the right proportions at the right times, forms the proper channel into which this tendency should be directed, and the food on which this desire for imaginative pleasures should be fed. Psychologically, imaginative literature is the direct development from this variety of play, and into this its unfoldment is natural.

VI. Pseudomania, or the love of lying for its own sake, apart from all considerations of prudence and interest.

Such lies may be called pathological, as significant of an altogether diseased condition of the moral nature. About a score of children, amongst those examined, seemed to be the victims of this mental disease. *E.g.* On going to a new school or a new place, a false character is assumed in order to show off. Some girls are always "posing" or acting a part. Boys seem to prefer "fooling" or "humbugging" people.

[The head mistress of a large public school for girls in England told me how, once, a great deal of annoyance and anxiety had been caused in the school by a girl of this type, who wrote a series of love-letters to herself in a feigned hand and deposited them about the school in places where they were sure to be found out, in order to create a mystery and a sensation.]

Girls of this kind may develop into hysterical invalids; boys into charlatans and impostors. At first accessory motives, such as love of applause, are involved, but this type of lying tends to end in what may truly be called *pseudomania*, an appetite indulged in directly against every motive of prudence and self-interest. Such cases, says Professor Stanley Hall, call for prompt and drastic treatment. The

first step is to withdraw all attention, sympathy and belief when deception is practised, and to give instruction and stern reprimand. If this fails, the rod should be tried, and if the rod fails the doctor should be sent for. [As lies of this kind are admitted to be pathological in their nature, would it not be advisable to send for the doctor before experimenting with the rod?]

VII. Finally there are the palliatives for lies, or the devices to which children resort to minimise the moral culpability of untruthfulness and ease their conscience—*e.g.*, a child who is asked if he has done something (which he has omitted to do) will answer "Yes," aloud, and add in a whisper, "in my mind"—which means "No."

To make a statement aloud and think "I do not mean it," or to mean it in a sense altogether different from what ordinary people would understand, has the same saving efficacy. The acted lie seems to press very lightly on the childish conscience, and the spoken lie is sometimes explained away when evidence becomes overwhelming by saying "my hand or my foot did it—not I."

[In short, among the three hundred children examined, some form of untruthfulness seems to have been admitted by all, or at least, if there were any exceptions, they are not mentioned.]

It is taken for granted that truthfulness is a virtue of late development, and that the numerous temptations of school life tend to make it later.

The practical question for the teacher is to distinguish carefully the different forms of the disease, and to apply the proper remedy to each. Untruthfulness springs from such opposite tendencies that a course of treatment that would cure one form might directly aggravate another. If we strive to realise the sense in which all sin and all disease are lies, because perversions of the intent of nature, we shall see how habitual falsehood may end, and in what a broad sense it begins.

The habit of robust truth-speaking is the best pedagogic preparation we can give the child to raise him above all the falsities to which we are prone. The effort to act a part is one of the chief sources of waste of moral energy in modern society. The habitual gratification of all a child's wishes



indirectly cultivates untruthfulness, for truth requires self-sacrifice, which luxury makes impossible. Much intercourse with strangers, and frequent changes of environment, encourage it, because opportunity is given of making "first impressions" consciously. Frequent novelty probably tends to develop one of its most incurable forms—that in which there is a constant craving for new sensations to be obtained at any cost.

[Professor Stanley Hall's conclusion seems to be that the excitement, luxury, craving for novelty, desire to show off and love of heightened effects, which characterise American Society,—all tend to encourage untruthful tendencies in children and to hinder the growth of habits of truthfulness. And who can say, that the faults he ascribes to American society are not to be found in our own?] He would have the children shielded as far as possible from these influences, and held to long and firm responsibility for their words and actions, encouraged to fall back on their best, their true self, and to be accepted for what they really are by nature and by heredity. Thus would the foundation be laid for new intellectual insight, purer emotional satisfaction, greater energy in action, perhaps even physical betterment in certain temperaments,—in short, for a general moral reformation of such a kind as would not be unworthy to be called Regeneration.

## HOW TO TEACH THE BIBLE TO OUR CHILDREN.

BY THE REV. HENRY SEELEY.

NO. II.

THE painstaking study of the elements of any subject is highly important, if we would make satisfactory progress in our subsequent efforts. For any of the main purposes of education the careful training of the infant mind is not to be neglected. Wrong habits are often formed in the very earliest years, wrong principles are often implanted, wrong notions somehow find place in the baby brain that years are required to eradicate, and such errors often remain through life. This is true of secular matters and of ordinary behaviour. It is now an axiom of educationists that it is not *anyone* who can teach and train the little ones, and the "teacher of babes" is therefore required to have special aptitude and special knowledge for the foundation work. It is for these reasons that all good Sunday School superintendents would desire the most competent teachers to take the gallery class.

Now, considering what the Bible is, and remembering what we have already said as to its difference from other books, we must lay much stress on Scripture teaching to infants. There is no other department of the instruction of childhood that involves so much, and there is no other set of subjects to be taught, that needs so thoroughly to be brought to bear on the early thoughts and years of juvenile life both for present and future requirements. Let me not be misunderstood. Neither in infancy, nor in any other period of growth, ought there to be such a superabundance of Bible teaching as should lead to mental and spiritual weariness. If our children should, through any error on the part of their instructors, acquire a distaste for history, for example, in comparison with other subjects that they learn, we should grievously deplore it as a calamity that ought to have been avoided. The same thing may also be said in their degree of any of the accomplishments. But by any means whatever